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To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I'll put it plain and simple:

Microsoft is a monopolistic company that can NOT be trusted. They don't seem to be learning either. Their tendencies have become so BLATANT, and so outright, that they seem to be bragging about it.

Example 1: PocketPC

"Choose the power of Windows. Choose the PocketPC." This advertising campaign is ubiquitous. Microsoft is promoting their PDA's by using slogans like "Use the software you know & trust" and "[program] is like a trusted friend." Even though the Palm OS handhelds (the hands-down direct victim of this campaign) offer full compatibility and in some cases, better compatibility (WordSmith or DocsToGo for example), Microsoft is creating the deceptive image that Palm OS handhelds are not much more than a Memo Pad, and that because the OS on the computer at home is Windows, that the OS on the PDA should be "Windows." Although, unlike Netscape, this isn't a case where Microsoft is beating their technology into the operating system, they ARE using words to do a very similar action.

Microsoft is also doing a bit of deceptive advertising along with the PocketPC campaign. Palm OS handhelds such as the Sony CLIE PEG-N710C & N760C can play Mp3 files, and play converted movie files with stereo sound. Palm OS handhelds such as the HandEra 330, as well as a great deal of the CLIE's also have high-resolution screens, something Microsoft does not even make mention of. Instead, they compare their PocketPC to a significantly lower-priced Palm model, assuming that they all are the same. Yet the PalmOS models that DO compete with the PocketPC in price terms are not listed.

This is simply an example, but it illustrates the point that Microsoft is using deceptive advertising to promote their products.

Example 2: Windows Media Player

This proprietary technology is starting to clamp down on competitive media. Although RealNetworks is holding its own, if nothing is done, Windows Media will head down the same route as Internet Explorer.

Unlike the file format Quicktime, Windows Media files are "locked" in the format, and cannot be decoded or exported into other formats. The problem arises when web sites encode media. Windows Media support for the Mac OS is absolutely terrible... to say the least. (then again, Realplayer isn't doing so well, either.) Not all WMP files are viewable,

and even then some bizarre things happen when trying to access media off of the internet. Although one might argue that Apple's Quicktime favors the Mac platform, at least Windows users are able to view ALL QT content, not just some of it. And as mentioned earlier, if trouble arises when sending a home movie to a friend on a PC, the file format is never "locked", so it can be exported to another format.

Microsoft is doing a lousy job of multiple OS support, and although I would never expect the Mac version to be as nice as the Windows version, the shoddiness of the product tells me that their chief concern with WMP, is keeping users locked into Microsoft's programs.

I should also mention, that Microsoft builds in a "Windows Media" button into the IE browser, as you may be well aware of.

Example 3: MSN & Passport

Microsoft, as usual with their first attempts, hasn't exactly thwarted AOL with their MSN service. But they're now starting to move in for the kill (as with Palm and RealNetworks.)

"There are some things you grow out of, AOL is one of them."

Ads like this run like crazy. And I know if I start up IE on a Windows PC, the default page will be MSN.com. When a family member of mine purchased his new Sony Laptop, it came with an MSN internet access disk. Even Apple recommends Earthlink as their ISP, but a big difference with Apple and Microsoft, is that when I install OSX, I don't get 30 reminders telling me I should sign up for an iTools account. Microsoft's .net is Microsoft's goal to dominate the net, in my opinion. Microsoft already controls the browser, OS, Office, and several other categories (not to mention the areas they're currently trying to control), now they want to control people's personal information.

What needs to be done:

Any proposal needs to benefit a neglected group: start-up companies, and standards not controlled by Microsoft. Had Microsoft never set out to milk one more market by crushing companies that pioneered it, people would most likely be using Netscape, Quicktime, WordPerfect / Clarisworks, and companies like Palm would not be hanging by the skin of their teeth, and Netscape would be thriving.

Already facing challenge is the controversial but now "official" format of Digital Music: Mp3. Microsoft isn't even supporting it (very much) with Windows XP, in favor of..... their own, proprietary format.

Although it sounds like "big brother", Microsoft should be BANNED from bundling ANYTHING with their OS, or even remotely "requiring" certain things be bundled due to "proprietary formats" developed by Microsoft.

(i.e. Windows Media) The PC makers (Compaq, HP, Dell, Sony, etc.) should solely decide as to what goes with it. Also, the source code of Windows needs to be openly available for developers. Netscape can't even integrate their browser, because Microsoft won't let them! Along with that, more work needs to be done to let other OS's be more compatible with Windows. Java is a great example of this.

One final note. As if Microsoft could be more outright about their desire to become a monopoly, I should mention the "lock-out" of Msn.com people of other browsers experienced (Opera, Netscape, etc.) , claiming that the browser's didn't support the page due to the lack of support for certain types of code. Microsoft later admitted that Opera's page rendering ability had nothing to do with it.

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